

this all across my district, with digital haves and have-nots just down the road from one another. It is a checkerboard of connectivity.

In the height of the pandemic, I heard one too many home-schooling horror stories that were a result of not having reliable access to the internet. A number of families were driving to the nearest local library, sitting in the parking lot, and connecting to the public WiFi in hopes of completing assignments.

COVID-19 laid bare the urgency of rural broadband, but the connectivity struggles in rural communities predate this pandemic, and they will not ease as we return to normal. As more of American life is being put online, more of it is being put out of reach of Americans without high-speed internet access, and those without are falling further behind.

Despite years of efforts and billions of dollars spent, too many communities are being left behind.

Broadband is not just needed for our homes; it is desperately needed on our farms as well. The demands of a 21st century farm economy depends on reliable connectivity.

The Agriculture Committee has done tremendous work on a bipartisan basis to address the digital divide, most recently with the broadband provisions in the 2018 farm bill. Those changes reflected 2 years of work to develop policies and design programs which meet the unique challenges of rural communities. That farm bill became law with broad bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

Unfortunately, those policies and programs are languishing. Changes and improvements championed by Members of both parties regarding eligible areas, long-term network viability, assistance for our most rural communities, program integrity, and more, remain unfunded and unimplemented more than 2 years after they were signed into law.

This is unacceptable. That is why I recently introduced the Broadband for Rural America Act. This bill is the responsible path forward to bridging the digital divide. It prioritizes the needs of rural communities and is a step in the right direction as we begin to rebound into a resurgent post-COVID economy. I urge my colleagues to join me on this critical piece of legislation.

The one issue that unites rural Members on both sides of the aisle is the need to address the digital divide. This critical infrastructure void has been exacerbated by the challenges faced by rural families and businesses during the pandemic.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to tell the story of the 2018 farm bill and the improvements we made and continue to fight for broadband investments so desperately needed in our rural communities.

#### RECOGNIZING PRIDE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stand in support of the LGBTQ community and to recognize this Pride Month.

This month is one of reflection: reflection on the strides our country has made toward acceptance and inclusion and on the struggles that still exist today.

From Stonewall, to the AIDS epidemic, to attacks on transgender youth across our country today, the struggle for equality continues.

This month is one of recognition for the trailblazers of decades past and the advocates on the ground today who make this country welcoming for everyone.

But most of all, this month is one of celebration. I am here to say loudly and clearly to all of my LGBTQ constituents in Nevada's Third District, you are respected and loved, and I have your back here in Washington.

While we mark 6 years of marriage equality this week and have continued to reach milestones in the time since, we have more work to do.

I am proud to have voted to pass the Equality Act out of the House, and it is time for the Senate to join us.

I hope you all take time this month to celebrate who you are. And from the bottom of my heart, Happy Pride Month.

#### HONORING CHRIS OBERHEIM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Champaign Police Officer Chris Oberheim of Monticello, Illinois, who tragically lost his life in the line of duty on May 19 of this year.

Officer Oberheim was a 21-year veteran of law enforcement. He joined the Champaign Police Department in 2013 after beginning his career with the Decatur Police Department in 2000. During his career, he received two medals of valor for selfless acts of bravery.

In his time off duty, Chris enjoyed coaching softball and spending time with his family. He was a loving husband, father, son, coach, and trusted friend. His four daughters were his inspiration. Those who knew Chris remember him most for his commitment to loving his family and serving his community.

My prayers are with his wife, Amber, and daughters Hannah, Avery, Addison, and Aubree, as well as the rest of his family, friends, and fellow officers. Chris was nothing short of a hero.

In closing, I would like to share a Bible verse that Chris' family says he lived by: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

#### HONORING GRACE HERSCHELMAN

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Grace Herschelman of Hillsboro, Illinois, who passed away on May 19 at the age of 9 after a lifelong battle with infantile neuroaxonal dystrophy, INAD.

When Grace was 3 years old, she was diagnosed with INAD, a neurodegenerative disease that results in a loss of muscle strength, movement, and the ability to speak. Grace did not let this stop her from enjoying many trips to the Saint Louis Zoo; rooting on her favorite soccer, softball, and basketball teams; and having a blast with her sister and best friend, Charlotte.

Grace and her family also had a huge impact on awareness and fundraising for INAD research. Since Grace was diagnosed in 2014, the Herschelman family has raised about \$200,000 for the INAD Cure Foundation, with donors from all 50 States.

Grace was an inspiration to all who met her, never failing to light up any room with her smile.

My prayers go out to her parents, Kyle and Mary, her sister, Charlotte, and the rest of her family.

Grace, may you rest in peace.

#### CONGRATULATING MARK BUTCHER

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mark Butcher on his retirement after 30 years of teaching math and science in the Rochester school district, Lincoln Christian University, and Lincoln Land Community College.

After working in the private sector for many years, Mark decided to go back to school to get his teaching certificate in 1991. Ever since then, he has taught at Rochester and also part-time at night at Lincoln Land where he would frequent my family's McDonald's in Taylorville for a quick dinner.

Over the past 30 years, Mark has taught, mentored, and given valuable career advice to thousands of students. Mark is known for his Einstein-like appearance and science experiments, which were highly educational but sometimes caused heartburn among the administration and school board members. He was instrumental in developing the dual credit program at Rochester, which has allowed hundreds of students to receive college credit for courses while still in high school.

Mark received numerous awards throughout his career, including the Rochester Teacher of the Year, the Golden Apple Excellence in Leadership award, Lincoln Land's Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award, and being named the State Journal Register's Top Teacher of the Year.

Congratulations on your retirement, Mark. Enjoy your time with your wife, Brenda, four children, and your six grandchildren.